

DIVORCE WITH CHILDREN

For Petitioner Only

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To File for Divorce

Part 1: Petition and First Court Papers
(Instruction Packet)

SELF-SERVICE CENTER

DIVORCE WITH CHILDREN FOR PETITIONER ONLY

PART 1 -- PETITION AND FIRST COURT PAPERS

This packet contains general information and instructions about filing a divorce petition for a non-covenant marriage and other papers when there are children. Be sure the documents are in the following order:

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SELF-SERVICE CENTER

INSTRUCTIONS: HOW TO FILL OUT PAPERS FOR DISSOLUTION OF A NON-COVENANT MARRIAGE (DIVORCE) WITH CHILDREN

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: Domestic violence can be part of any marriage. Domestic violence includes physical violence such as hitting, slapping, pushing or kicking **or** threats of physical violence directed against you and/or your children **and/or** verbal abuse used to control you and/or your children.

Court documents request your address and phone number. If you are a victim of domestic violence, and you do **not** want your address to be known to protect yourself or your children from further violence, you **must file** a **"Petition for an Order of Protection"** and ask that your address **not** be disclosed on court papers. With that Order, you do not need to put your address and phone number on your divorce papers. Just write "protected" in the space on the form where you are asked for this information. You must tell the Clerk of the Court your address and phone number as soon as possible so the court can get in touch with you. The court will keep your address protected.

FAMILY COURT COVERSHEET:

Print or type in black ink.

Case Type: Check only one box that matches the legal procedure for which you are filing the documents in this packet.

Information About the Petitioner: Write in your name, address, home telephone number, work telephone number, cell phone/pager number, date of birth, social security number, and e-mail address in the space provided. If your address and telephone numbers are protected, you do not need to fill in this information. However, you must let the Clerk of the Court know how to reach you. If a lawyer represents you, the Petitioner, you must also write in the lawyer's name and bar number.

Information about the other party, the Respondent: Write in the name of the Respondent. If you know the Respondent's address, home telephone number, work telephone number, cell phone/pager number, date of birth, social security number, and e-mail address, you must write in this information.

Minor Children Involved: List the names, dates of birth, and social security numbers for any minor children involved in this specific case.

Other Minor Children: If there are other children of either the Petitioner or the Respondent or both not involved with this case, list their names on the lines provided.

Other court cases: Check the appropriate box to tell this Court if either you or your spouse have been involved in any other cases, except a minor traffic offense, in any other court. If you check the Yes box, please describe the case, including case numbers and court location.

Domestic Violence Section: Answer the questions listed regarding domestic violence. This information will help court staff determine if this issue is relevant to this case.

Children's Issues Section: Answer the questions regarding the children you listed on **the "Family Court Cover Sheet."** This information will help court staff determine if these issues are relevant to this case, and/or whether a case exists in this Court already regarding any child you listed.

Location: If you are filing your documents in the downtown Phoenix location, check the Downtown Phoenix box, if you are filing your documents in the Northeast Phoenix location, check the Northeast Phoenix box, if you are filing your documents in the Southeast Facility in Mesa, check the Southeast Facility box, if you are filing your documents in the Northwest Facility in Surprise, check the Northwest Facility box.

SUMMONS AND PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION: Fill in the following information: Your name; street address (**if not protected**); city, state and zip code; telephone number; ATLAS number; name of Petitioner (your name); name of Respondent (your spouse's name). You will have an ATLAS number **ONLY** if you receive or have received AFDC or other public benefits for your child(ren) that are common to you and your spouse. If you are represented by an attorney, write in the attorney's bar number. Tell the court whether you represent yourself or are represented by an attorney. **DO NOT** fill out the rest of the form except on Page 2 of the Preliminary Injunction, fill out the description of other party. The Clerk of Court will complete it later.

***"PETITION FOR DISSOLUTION OF A NON-COVENANT MARRIAGE (DIVORCE)
WITH CHILDREN"***

- A. Use this form **ONLY** if you are getting a divorce and there are children under the age of 18 years involved who are common to you and your spouse, and you have a non-covenant marriage. Arizona laws regarding "covenant" marriages went into effect August 21, 1998. See ARS §25-901. If you have a covenant marriage, you and your spouse were asked to sign an affidavit that included a statement similar to this: "We solemnly declare that marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman who agree to live together as husband and wife for as long as they both live. We have chosen each other carefully. We understand that a covenant marriage is for life. If we experience marital difficulties, we commit ourselves to take all reasonable efforts to preserve our marriage, including marital counseling. We declare that our marriage will be bound by Arizona law regarding covenant marriages and we promise to love, honor and care for one another as husband and wife for the rest of our lives." (This paperwork will **not** work if you have a covenant marriage. If you have questions about whether you have a "covenant" marriage, look at your marriage license and/or see a lawyer for help.) Make sure your form is titled ***"Petition for Dissolution of Non-Covenant Marriage (Divorce) With Children."***
- B. In the top left corner of the first page, fill out the following: your name (if you are the person filling out the petition and filing the petition with the court); your address (**if not protected**); your city, state and zip code; your telephone number; and your **ATLAS** number, if you are receiving or have received AFDC from the Arizona Department of Economic Security and the attorney bar number if you are represented by an attorney. Then check the box to say whether you are represented or not. If an attorney represents you, write in your name in the space after "Attorney for."
- C. Fill in **your** name in the space that says "Name of Petitioner." Remember, you will be the PETITIONER through the whole case. (This includes any emergency petitions, temporary petitions, and post-divorce decree petitions.) In the space that says "Name of Respondent," fill in the name of your spouse. Your spouse will be the RESPONDENT for the rest of this case. (This includes any emergency petitions, temporary petitions, and post-divorce decree petitions.)
- D. Leave the space for Case No. _____ blank. When you file your papers, you will receive a case number.

STATEMENTS MADE TO THE COURT, UNDER OATH OR AFFIRMATION:

1. **INFORMATION ABOUT ME, THE PETITIONER.** Fill in your name, address (**if not protected**), date of birth, occupation, and length of time in Arizona.
2. **INFORMATION ABOUT MY SPOUSE, THE RESPONDENT.** Fill in your spouse's name, address, (if you know it) date of birth, occupation, and length of time in Arizona.

3. **INFORMATION ABOUT MY MARRIAGE.** Fill in the date that you were married and the city and state where you were married. If you do not know this information, and you were married in Maricopa County, you may get a copy of your marriage license from the Clerk of the Court Record Center at 601 West Jackson Street in Downtown Phoenix. If you were married in another county, go to the Clerk of the Superior Court at the county seat in the county where you were married. Then check the box to tell the court you do not have a "covenant" marriage. If you have a "covenant marriage," see a lawyer for help. If you do not know whether you have a covenant marriage or not, review your marriage license and/or see a lawyer for help.
4. **90-DAY REQUIREMENT.** This tells the court that you **or** your spouse have lived in Arizona, **or** been stationed in Arizona while in the Armed Forces, for at least 90 (ninety) days prior to the day you filed the Petition for Dissolution. Before you file for Divorce, this **MUST** be true. **IF IT IS NOT TRUE, YOU CANNOT FILE FOR DIVORCE** in Arizona until it becomes true.
5. **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.** This tells the court if domestic violence was in the marriage, which affects a request for joint custody, (if you intend to ask for joint custody). If you are not sure what domestic violence means, see the "Domestic Violence" section on the first page of these instructions. Check the box that applies to your situation.
6. **CHILDREN COMMON TO THE PARTIES WHO ARE LESS THAN 18 YEARS OF AGE.** If there are no children under the age of 18 born to, or adopted by, you and your spouse, you should use the **"Petition for Dissolution of a Non-Covenant Marriage - Without Children"** Packet. Otherwise, check the second box and provide the name, birth date and current home address including city, state, and zip code for each child born to, or adopted by, you and your spouse.
7. **PREGNANCY.** If the wife is **NOT** pregnant at this time, check the first box and go on. If the wife **is** pregnant, check the second box. Fill out the date the baby is due, and fill in any information regarding the parents of the unborn child.

INFORMATION ABOUT PROPERTY AND DEBT: The information you give in paragraphs 8a through 9b tells the court about your property and debts, and how you think your property and debts should be divided. Community property is generally any property you and your spouse purchased during your marriage or paid for during the marriage, no matter who uses the property or who paid the money. Unless property was a gift or inheritance, all property gotten (acquired) during the marriage up until the time when the Respondent is served with the Petition for Dissolution is generally community property, and both you and your spouse are entitled to roughly an equal share of this property. Community debts or bills are generally any debt you and your spouse acquired during your marriage up until the time the Respondent is served with the Petition for Dissolution, no matter who spent the money. If you have questions, or have a lot of community property or debt, you should speak with an attorney **BEFORE** filing your Petition and other papers.

- 8.A. **PROPERTY ACQUIRED DURING THE MARRIAGE. COMMUNITY PROPERTY.** If you and your spouse do not have any property from the marriage, check the first box. If you and your spouse have property together, check the second box. If you checked the second box, you must tell the court what property should go to you and what property should go to your spouse. Generally, the court will divide the property 50-50, unless there are good reasons not to. It is unlikely that the court will give most or all of the property to either spouse, so put some thought into what you think would be a fair division before answering this question. Usually, if you and your spouse cannot decide which spouse should receive what property, the court will order that the property be sold and any money received divided between you and your spouse.

First, list the property that you want the court to award to you, the Petitioner, and list the property that you want the court to award to your spouse, the Respondent. Put a check in the box that matches the property you want to go to which person. You should describe the property thoroughly for identification purposes. Use the brand name, model and serial numbers, where applicable.

Types of property:

- a) **Real Property (property or home).** Check who you want to get the property. You can ask the court to give you the home, to give the home to your spouse, or to sell the home and divide the proceeds. You should write the complete address of the property under "Real estate located at" Most property has a legal description such as "LOT 77, PINE TREE ACRES, according to Book 111 of Maps," which appears on your deed papers. You should use this description. A cemetery plot is considered real property.
- b) **Household furniture.** This includes sofas, beds, tables, and so forth. Be specific.
- c) **Household furnishings.** This includes things in the house other than furniture, for example: dishes, small appliances, rugs, and so forth. Be specific.
- d) **Other.** List things that you want or your want your spouse to have that have not already been listed.
- e) **Pension/retirement fund/profit sharing/stock plans/401K.** You and your spouse each generally have an interest of up to 50% (one-half) of the other spouse's plan, for the number of years you were married. The longer the marriage, the greater your financial interest in your spouse's plan (up to 50 percent of the benefits/plan if you have been married the whole time the plan has existed.) Check this box if you want to divide your interest in a retirement or profit sharing/retirement/401K plan. If you check this box, you must see an attorney about a **document** called a **Qualified Domestic Relations Order or QDRO. A QDRO is a very specialized legal document that requires professional assistance to prepare.** The Self-Service Center and the court **do not** have Qualified Domestic Relations Order forms.
- f) **Motor vehicles.** List the vehicle identification number, the year and make of the car (Ford, Honda) and the model (Mustang, Lumina).

8.b. PROPERTY ACQUIRED BEFORE MARRIAGE. SEPARATE PROPERTY. If you did not have or bring any property into the marriage, check the first box. If your spouse did not have or bring any property into the marriage, check the next box. If you or your spouse brought property into the marriage or acquired property after the Respondent was served with the Petition for Dissolution, check the third and/or fourth box. If you checked the third and/or fourth box, you must tell the court what property you brought into the marriage and what property your spouse brought into the marriage. List the property that you want the court to award to you, the Petitioner and list the property that you want the court to award to your spouse, the Respondent. Put a check in the box that matches the property you want to go to which person. You should describe the property thoroughly for identification purposes. You can use the brand name and model and serial numbers where applicable.

9.a DEBTS INCURRED DURING THE MARRIAGE. If you and your spouse do not owe money on any debts from the marriage, check the first box and go on. If you and your spouse owe money on any debts from the marriage, check the second box. If you check the second box, tell the court which debts you should pay and which debts your spouse should pay. Generally, the court will attempt to make a fair division of the debts. If you get property that has debt on it, you will probably also be given the debt. Ordering one person to pay all the debt is unusual. Think about what is a fair division of the debts before answering this question. Put enough information to identify each debt.

If you and your spouse have been separated and have acquired new debts on your own since the separation and before filing for divorce, you may want the court to order that each of you pay for any new debt after the date you separated. You can make this request on the last page of your Petition under Letter I, "Community Debts."

9.b. SEPARATE DEBTS. DEBTS INCURRED PRIOR TO MARRIAGE. If you and your spouse did not owe money on any debts before you were married, check the first box and GO ON. If you owed money on debts before you were married, check the second box. If your spouse owed money on debts before you were married, check the third box. If either you or your spouse owe money on any debts you or your spouse brought into the marriage, describe the debts, and tell the court which debts you should pay and which debts your spouse should pay.

10. **TAX RETURNS.** Decide what you want to do about any income tax refund. Check the box that applies to you. If you have questions about which box you can check, you should see a lawyer, an accountant, and/or contact the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
11. **SPOUSAL MAINTENANCE /SUPPORT** is the term used to describe money paid from one spouse to the other spouse as part of a divorce settlement. You may know the term as alimony. Spousal maintenance/support is designed as a safety net for a spouse who cannot provide for his/her needs or who meets other requirements listed on the Petition under paragraph 11. The idea behind spousal maintenance/support is that accomplishments during your marriage, including increases in earning potential and living standards, are shared and earned by **BOTH** parties to a marriage. Look at paragraph 11 to see if spousal maintenance/support applies to you or your spouse. Check as many boxes as apply to your situation. Spousal maintenance/support is paid separately from child support and is **not** a substitute for, or a supplement to, child support.
12. **OTHER STATEMENTS TO THE COURT.** You are telling the court that you believe the following statements are true. If the statements are not true, see a lawyer for help:
- Your marriage is irretrievably broken. This means that your marriage is over and you do not believe you can get back with your spouse.
 - The conciliation requirements do not apply or have been met. This means that you do not think marriage counseling through the court will help you get back with your spouse or resolve your marital issues.
 - This court has the power to decide child custody issues. Generally, this means that the children have lived in the State of Arizona for the past six (6) months, or if they are younger than six (6) months, since birth.
- If this statement is not true, see a lawyer for help.**
13. **WRITTEN CUSTODY AGREEMENT.** Check this box **ONLY** if you and your spouse have a written agreement regarding custody, visitation and child support that **both** of you signed **BEFORE** you filed the **"Petition for Dissolution of Marriage"**. If you have only discussed these issues and do **not** have a written agreement, do **NOT** check this box.

REQUESTS TO THE COURT. This section requests that the court grant you and your spouse your divorce and tells the court other requests you are making:

- A. **DISSOLUTION.** This is your request to end your non-covenant marriage by a divorce.
- B. **NAMES.** Write in this section only if you want to use your maiden or former name. Write in your maiden name or former last name in the space provided. If you are **not** the person who is requesting to have your former name restored, the court must have a written request from the party who wants his or her name restored in order to change the name.
- C. **CHILD CUSTODY AND VISITATION:**
- C.1. **SOLE CUSTODY OF CHILDREN AND VISITATION.** If you want sole custody, check the box that applies, including the visitation you are asking for. Tell the court whether you want custody of the children to go to you (the Petitioner) or your spouse (the Respondent).
- VISITATION:** Check only one box. You can ask that the non-custodial parent (the parent having physical custody of the child less than 50% of the time) have one of the following types of visitation (If you want to know more about custody and visitation, read the Parent Access Guidelines that you received with your packet):

Reasonable visitation. This suggests an amount of visitation appropriate to the age of the child(ren). The court offers suggested amounts of visitation, but the amount can vary by agreement of both parents.

Supervised visitation to the non-custodial parent. You should request supervised visitation if the non-custodial parent cannot adequately care for the child(ren) without another person present. You may request this if the non-custodial parent has a problem with drugs or alcohol; is violent or abusive; or does not have the parenting skills to care for the child(ren) without another adult present. Remember, supervised visitation is not intended to punish the parent, but to protect the child(ren).

No visitation to the non-custodial parent. You should mark this option only if the non-custodial parent has seriously harmed, abused, or otherwise is a serious danger to the child(ren)'s physical and/or emotional health, or if there is a criminal court order stating no contact between the child and the non-custodial parent. You may use this as a last resort to protect the child.

OR

C.2. JOINT CUSTODY: If you are asking for joint custody, you must file a Joint Custody Agreement signed by both parents that the court must approve.

- D. CHILD SUPPORT:** Tell the court who you think should pay child support. The person who has custody of the child(ren), or who has physical care of the child(ren) more than 50% of the time, is the person who should receive the support. The other spouse, often called the "non-custodial" parent, must pay the support. The income of the parties generally determines the amount of the support according to court guidelines. You must check only one box.
- E. INSURANCE AND HEALTH CARE EXPENSES FOR CHILDREN:** Check only one box. Tell the court which parent should provide insurance for the children. Whichever parent has the most affordable insurance plan available through work, generally should pay for insurance. Adjustments can be made to child support to reflect the costs of insurance for the children.
- F. TAX EXEMPTION.** Decide how you and your spouse will declare the tax dependency exemptions, for which child(ren), for which years. Federal Tax law also determines this for you. If you are not sure, see a lawyer and/or an accountant for help.
- G. SPOUSAL MAINTENANCE/SUPPORT (ALIMONY).** This tells the court that you or your spouse should pay money to the other spouse on a monthly basis to help with living expenses. Check the first box if **YOU** (the Petitioner) will be paying spousal maintenance/support. Check the second box if **YOUR SPOUSE** (the Respondent) will be paying spousal maintenance/support. If you or your spouse should not pay spousal maintenance/support, do not check either box, and **GO ON. (You can check a box only if you checked the same box in the spousal maintenance/support section on page 5, paragraph 11.)** If you request spousal maintenance/support, choose what you believe to be a reasonable monthly amount and tell the court how long the money should be paid. Base the amount of any request on the receiving party's need and the income of the party paying this money.

Spousal maintenance/support is not a substitute for, or a supplement to, court ordered child support.

- H. COMMUNITY PROPERTY.** This tells the court that your division of the property is fair.
- I. COMMUNITY DEBT.** This tells the court that your division of the debt is fair, and that the court should divide the debts as requested by you in your Petition. If you have been separated from your spouse long enough that you or your spouse may have additional debts, write down the date of your separation on the line provided if you want each spouse to pay his/her debts incurred after you separated.
- J. SEPARATE PROPERTY and DEBTS.** This states that you will keep the property you owned before the marriage and that your spouse will keep the property he/she owned before the marriage. It also says that you will pay your separate debts and your spouse will pay his/her separate debts.

K. OTHER ORDERS: Tell the court anything else you may want ordered that has not been covered in your Petition.

OATH OR AFFIRMATION AND VERIFICATION OF PETITIONER: Sign this form in front of a notary public. By doing so, you are telling the court that everything contained in the Petition for Dissolution is true.

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO CONVERT HEALTH INSURANCE: This is an important document that explains what to do about health care coverage for yourself and your child(ren). Read it carefully, and be sure a copy is served on your spouse, along with the other divorce papers.

AFFIDAVIT OF MINOR CHILDREN: You must complete this document. Fill in the information completely and to the best of your knowledge.

ORDER and NOTICE REGARDING THE PARENT INFORMATION PROGRAM: This is an important document. You and the other parent must attend and complete a class in the Parent Information Program. This is a very exciting and wonderful class. It was designed to help you. The purpose of the Parent Information Program is to give parents information about the impacts that divorce, the changes in the family unit, and court involvement have on children involved in a divorce, paternity, or custody case. This Notice applies to **all** parents who file an action for dissolution of marriage or legal separation, or any paternity proceeding, in which a party has requested that the court determine custody, visitation or support, and to all other domestic relations cases if ordered by the court. **Make sure you read this order and notice and serve the other party with it.**

NOTICE REGARDING CREDITORS: This is an important document that tells you and your spouse that you are responsible for community debts to creditors even though the court order or decree says that only one of you (either you or your spouse) are responsible. This notice must be served on your spouse. In addition, read this notice to find out how to obtain information from your creditors about account balances.

OTHER IMPORTANT PAPERS IN THIS PACKET: Before you get an order from the judge you must complete the court papers on what you want the judge to order about child custody and access (visitation), and for child support. The court papers you need, with guidelines and/or instructions, are included in packet four, the court order packet. These court forms, and those prepared by the other party, are what the judge will use when it is time to sign the order about custody, visitation, and support. You can complete the papers about custody, visitation and support now, and serve or provide copies to the other party. Or, you can complete the papers before the final court hearing date. The Family Support Center of the Clerk of the Court will help you with Child Support calculations for the Worksheet.

SELF-SERVICE CENTER

PROCEDURES: HOW TO FILE PAPERS WITH THE COURT FOR DISSOLUTION OF A NON-COVENANT MARRIAGE (DIVORCE) – WITH CHILDREN

STEP 1: Make **1** copy of the “*Family Court Cover Sheet*” after you have filled it out.

Make **2** copies of the following documents after you have filled them out:

- “*Sensitive Data Sheet*”
- “*Summons*”
- “*Preliminary Injunction*”
- “*Petition for Dissolution of Marriage (Divorce)*”
- “*Notice of Right to Convert Health Insurance*”
- “*Order and Notice for the Parent Information Program*”
- “*Notice Regarding Creditors*”
- “*Affidavit of Minor Children*”

STEP 2: SEPARATE YOUR DOCUMENTS INTO THREE (3) SETS:

SET 1 - ORIGINALS FOR CLERK OF COURT:

- “*Family Court Cover Sheet*”
- “*Sensitive Data Sheet*”
- “*Summons*”
- “*Preliminary Injunction*”
- “*Petition for Dissolution of Marriage*”
- “*Notice of Right to Convert Health Insurance*”
- “*Order and Notice for Parent Information Program*”
- “*Affidavit of Minor Children*”
- “*Notice Regarding Creditors*”

SET 2 - COPIES FOR SPOUSE:

- “*Sensitive Data Sheet*”
- “*Summons*”
- “*Preliminary Injunction*”
- “*Petition for Dissolution of Marriage*”
- “*Notice of Right to Convert Health Insurance*”
- “*Order and Notice for Parent Information Program*”
- “*Affidavit of Minor Children*”
- “*Notice Regarding Creditors*”

SET 3 – COPIES FOR YOU:

- “*Family Court Cover Sheet*”
- “*Sensitive Data Sheet*”
- “*Summons*”
- “*Preliminary Injunction*”
- “*Petition for Dissolution of Marriage*”
- “*Notice of Right to Convert Health Insurance*”
- “*Order and Notice for Parent Information Program*”
- “*Affidavit of Minor Children*”
- “*Notice Regarding Creditors*”

STEP 3: FILE THE PAPERS AT THE COURT:

GO TO: **GO TO THE COURT TO FILE YOUR PAPERS:** The court is open from 8am-5pm, Monday-Friday. **You should go to the court at least two hours before it closes.** You may file your court papers at the following Superior Court locations:

The Clerk of the Superior Court
Central Court Building
201 West Jefferson, 1st floor
Phoenix, Arizona 85003

The Clerk of the Superior Court
Southeast Court Complex
222 East Javelina Drive, 1st floor
Mesa, Arizona 85210

The Clerk of the Superior Court
Northwest Court Complex
14264 West Tierra Buena Lane
Surprise, Arizona 85374

The Clerk of Superior Court
Northeast Regional Court Center
18380 North 40th Street
Phoenix, AZ 85032

FILE: Go to the Clerk of the Court filing counter to file your documents.

FEES: There is a filing fee and service fees for all Petitions. If you think you are entitled to a fee deferral (postponement or payment plan), you may request a deferral of the filing fees (and the Sheriff's service fees if you intend to use the Sheriff's Office for service) at the time you file your papers with the Clerk of the Court. The Self-Service Center and the Filing Counter have the deferral forms.

PAPERS: Hand all three (3) sets of your court papers to the Clerk along with cash, check or a Money Order for the filing fee of **\$276.00**.

MAKE SURE YOU GET THE FOLLOWING BACK FROM THE CLERK:

- Your Set of Copies
- Your Spouse's Set of Copies

STEP 4: Read the packet at the Self-Service Center called "Service of Court Papers" that applies to your situation. This will explain how to serve the other party. Remember to file your Affidavit, Waiver or Acceptance of Service as soon as the Respondent is served.